

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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June 8, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: John H. Holdridge

SUBJECT: WSAG Meeting, Monday, June 8, 1970

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Since the meeting of June 4, the following actions have been taken:

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Items for discussion at this meeting include:

- Military and political moves relating to the NVA/VC attack on Seam Reap.
- Provision of captured Communist arms to the Cambodians.

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- The Green Triangle situation.
- Improvement of intelligence collection and analysis concerning Cambodia.
- 1. Military and Political Moves Relating to the NVA/VC Attack on Seam Reap.

A. The Situation

- As of June 7 the city of Seam Reap, which is very near the historic ruins of Angkor Wat, was under heavy NVA/VC attack, and the main airfield was unusable due to Communist seizure of an adjacent airstrip.
- The Cambodians feel that the loss of Seam Reap and Angkor Wat would be a major psychological and political blow. It would depict the Cambodian situation as very serious, hurt morale, and possibly provide an opportunity to Sihanouk to set up a capital there at the ancient Khmer capital which could not be attacked because of the need to preserve the ruins. ^{25X1}

- Four RVNAF dragon ships for use in the defense of Seam Reap and Kampong Thom, also under heavy attack, as well.
- GVN helicopters to transport a battalion of Cambodian paratroopers from Phnom Penh to the vicinity of Seam Reap. ^{25X1}

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-- Abrams said that the distance from South Vietnam to Seam Reap was too great to permit GVN helicopters to operate as far as Seam Reap and proposed setting up a helicopter base at Seam Reap with facilities for air-ground communications. He favors the GVN giving this aid. (See Tab 3.)

-- Unger has called the attention of Dawee and Praphat to the ^{25X1} situation.

-- Meanwhile, Unger has proposed, and Rives seconded, the thought that the Cambodians should make an immediate public report and appeal for good offices on the part of the Geneva Co-Chairmen, the ICC members, the UN Secretary General, the Pope, and other appropriate personages and international institutions to spare the Angkor ruins. This would be intended to put pressure on Hanoi, "discommode" the Communists, and somewhat dilute our side's vulnerability to similar pressure if Angkor Wat should fall (s25X1 cable at Tab 4).

-- State's East Asia and International Organization Bureaus have on their own gone to U Thant with a proposal that he make an appeal similar to that put forward by Unger. He is thinking it over.

B. Questions You May Wish to Raise:

-- What is the current military situation around Seam Reap? (The representative of the Joint Chiefs should be able to provide a briefing.)

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--(Our present guidelines for the RVNAF are focussed more on the sanctuary areas and LOC's to them than on operations deep into Cambodia, on the theory that the Vietnamese are "fighting the Vietnam war in Cambodia." There should be, however, some latitude within this theory in that Hanoi has now broadened the war to include a much larger area than before.)

-- What position should we take with respect to Unger's proposal 25X1

-- (We should find out more about the geography of the area - is it possible to defend Seam Reap and its airport without menacing Angkor Wat?)

-- (Perhaps the matter may be taken out of our hands by the EA/IO pitch to U Thant. He may well go ahead on his own. But we

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ourselves are conscious of the overriding need to preserve the Angkor Wat and Angkor Thom complex, and should do whatever seems compatible with this end.)

2. Provision of Captured Communist Arms to the Cambodians.

- Lon Nol has indicated that he wants us to take action on turning over arms captured in the Communist caches to his forces. He has offered to check the amounts recovered against Cambodian lists to facilitate such a turn-over, and to see if we have missed anything. (See cable from Phnom Penh at Tab 5.)
- There seems to be some hint in this cable that the ARVN wants merely to "share" the captured arms with the Cambodians rather than to turn them all over.
- At the last WSAG meeting you asked for a program for delivering captured arms to the Cambodians to be worked out by today, and the JCS representative agreed. He said that he would cable MACV on providing lists for use by the Cambodians.

You may wish to raise these questions:

- What is the status of the program, to transfer captured arms to the Cambodians? Is there any way in which this matter could be expedited? Would U.S. assistance be required?
- Has the list of captured arms been drawn up by MACV?
- Is there any reason why these arms should be "shared" with the ARVN, rather than be turned over in toto to the Cambodians?

3. The Green Triangle Situation.

- In the incoming cable at Tab 6, Phnom Penh wondered if consideration should not be given to the possible use of Cambodian bases in the Green Triangle as forward areas from which the Cambodian Army could possibly harass LOC's at some future date.
- At the June 4 WSAG meeting, you asked for a cable to be sent to MACV asking for its reaction to Phnom Penh's suggestion.

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Questions which you may wish to address:

- Should reconsideration be given to support for Cambodian forces in the Green Triangle in order to permit operations to be staged from this region against LOC's ?
- Have we heard from MACV concerning this matter ?

4. Improvement of Intelligence Collection and Analysis Concerning Cambodia. 25X1

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Questions which you might wish to ask are:

- Do CIA and Defense have the firm recommendations which were requested ?
- Assuming a plan is provided, how long will it take to be implemented ? (Its need would appear to be urgent.)
- Would it be desirable to have U.S. personnel involved in the proposed joint operations center ? If so, how can this be done within legal requirements ?
- What decisions need to be made ?

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